

**Question for written answer E-008311/2014  
to the Commission**

Rule 130

**José Blanco López (S&D)**

Subject: Promotion of the cooperative movement

The EU is home to some 160 000 cooperatives, which provide employment for more than five million people. Their contribution to Member States' GDP is estimated at around 5% on average. They also make a special contribution to the economic development of local and regional communities and, as socially responsible enterprises, facilitate the social and occupational integration of people with disabilities.

The economic crisis has highlighted the fact that they are highly resilient, pay higher wages and enjoy greater profitability, and that the investments they make contribute to the development of the real economy.

Cooperatives are therefore the best example of the social market economy that inspires the EU Treaty and the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

1. Is the Commission considering the possibility of promoting legislative harmonisation to remove obstacles to the development of cooperatives in the various Member States? And, whatever the case, what initiatives is it considering introducing to promote cooperatives?
2. Is it considering tax incentives or other ways of overcoming the difficulties cooperatives experience in raising funding?
3. And lastly, is it considering the possibility of promoting the creation of cooperatives at national and European level?